NOVA SCOTIA
Senior Citizens' Secretariat

Nova Scotia Senior Citizens' Secretariat

Business Plan

2004-2005

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A. MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

As Chair of the Senior Citizens' Secretariat, I am pleased to table the Secretariat's Business Plan for 2004-05. The Government of Nova Scotia has made the health and well-being of seniors a priority and this, the Secretariat's first business plan, supports that priority.

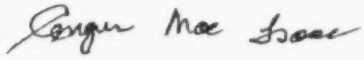
In 2004-05, the Senior Citizens' Secretariat will build on its past success as it continues to facilitate the development of public policies and programs for seniors, in partnership with government departments and voluntary seniors groups.

In addition to promoting a broad and comprehensive understanding of seniors issues, the Secretariat provides government with the multi-disciplinary perspective needed to develop appropriate public policies, programs, and services for seniors today and in the future. It also gives older Nova Scotians a strong voice in planning their future.

A key priority of the Secretariat this year is to provide leadership for the Nova Scotia Task Force on Aging. The Task Force will consult with Nova Scotians and seek their input on the development of a provincial strategy for positive aging – to guide our response to the challenges and opportunities of an aging population.

Other priorities for 2004-05 will see the Secretariat leading the implementation of the elder abuse prevention strategy, partnering with the Office of Health Promotion to encourage healthy living among seniors, and establishing partnerships with other organizations to strengthen community-based, peer support, and volunteer networks for seniors.

These and many other investments clearly demonstrate the government's ongoing commitment to seniors and to achieving the Secretariat's vision, "Nova Scotia, a society for all ages, promotes the well-being and contributions of older people in all aspects of life."



The Honourable Angus MacIsaac
Chairperson of the Senior Citizens' Secretariat

B. INTRODUCTION

The Nova Scotia Seniors Citizens' Secretariat facilitates the development of policies on aging and programs for seniors across government. The Secretariat consists of the Minister of Health, Minister of Community Services, Minister of Education, Minister of Service Nova Scotia & Municipal Relations, and Minister of Health Promotion. The Minister of Health serves as the Chairperson of the Secretariat and Nova Scotia's Minister Responsible for Seniors. The Secretariat is staffed by an Executive Director and five permanent staff.

C. MANDATE

The Secretariat's mandate is to serve as a resource and information centre on all matters relating to aging and seniors and to facilitate the planning and development of services and programs for seniors by:

- developing plans, policies, and programs for and with seniors in partnership with government departments and voluntary seniors groups
- coordinating plans, policies, and programs presented by government departments.

D. VISION

Nova Scotia, a society for all ages, promotes the well-being and contributions of older people in all aspects of life. *(Modeled after Vision for National Framework on Aging)*

E. PLANNING CONTEXT

The Government of Nova Scotia has made the well-being of seniors a priority. In the coming decades, the aging of our communities will create unprecedented economic, social, and political challenges and opportunities that have wide-ranging implications for the programs and services that contribute to the well-being of seniors.

Demographics: Nova Scotia's population is already the oldest in Atlantic Canada and the third oldest in Canada. Every day in this province, 21 Nova Scotians celebrate their 65th birthday, a number that will rise steadily with the aging of the baby-boomers. Seniors are the fastest growing population group in Nova Scotia and Canada. Today, the number of seniors in Nova Scotia is estimated at 131,000 — a figure that, by 2026, is expected to almost double to 239,000. In 2026, seniors will make up one-quarter of Nova Scotia's population.

The rapid aging of the province's population is already evident in many Nova Scotia communities. Nearly one in five residents (18 %) of Nova Scotia's 32 towns is 65 or older. In fact, more than one-quarter of the residents of Mahone Bay, Lunenburg, Digby, and Annapolis Royal are seniors.

Health: The health status of the vast majority of Nova Scotia seniors allows them to live independently in the community. Only five percent of seniors reside in nursing homes or licensed residential care facilities. The remaining 95 percent live at home in owned or rented accommodation.

The use of the health care system tends to increase with age. Physician visits to both general practitioners and specialists increase steadily with age. Similarly, the use of health care services such as emergency visits, outpatient procedures, and surgery generally increases with age. In 2001/02, seniors accounted for over four in ten (42%) adult hospitalizations.

Literacy Levels: Nova Scotia seniors generally have low literacy levels. In 1994, fewer than one in five seniors had the minimum level of literacy required for coping effectively with day-to-day activities and interactions. Recent studies link poor health status with low literacy levels (AMA).

Income: Although seniors are better off financially than ever before, they continue to have lower incomes than their younger counterparts. In 2000, the average household income for the 74,700 senior households in the province was $31,100. Incomes among seniors were 35% lower than the 50-64 age group, and 45% below the under 50 group. Seniors derived about half of their income from Old Age Security (OAS) and Canada Pension Plan (CPP), a third from private pensions, and the remainder from investments and employment. However, despite income security programs, 6% or 7,000 seniors were living below Statistic Canada's low-income cut-off (LICO) in 1999. The vast majority (85%) of seniors living in economic hardship were women living by themselves.

The primary responsibility for providing leadership on aging issues rests with the government. The Senior Citizens' Secretariat, whose Ministers are responsible for departments with program responsibilities for the seniors population, is the appropriate agency to provide this leadership.

To allow sufficient lead time to address the complex public policy and resource allocation issues that will arise as Nova Scotia's population ages, government must begin planning now. The design of appropriate solutions and the development of an action plan will require the collaboration of many departments and all levels of government, as well as the active involvement of content experts and well-informed seniors.

F. STRATEGIC GOALS

The Secretariat is committed to supporting the Government of Nova Scotia's priorities:

1. Building Greater Prosperity
2. Health Care - better, faster health care and healthier Nova Scotians
3. Learning is succeeding
4. Protecting what Nova Scotians value
   - Seniors
   - Families and Nova Scotians in need
   - Environment
   - Cultural diversity
   - Consumer protection/insurance
   - Safer Communities/streets
5. Fiscal responsibility and accountability

Consistent with its mission and legislated mandate, the Secretariat will support these provincial priorities by:

1. Providing leadership in the promotion of aging-related research and in the planning, development, and integration of policies and programs for a rapidly aging population.

2. Seeking the input and views of older Nova Scotians to assist in public policy development and ensure seniors have a strong voice in planning for their future.

3. Encouraging the development of government and community-based programs and services that allow seniors to *age in place*.

4. Promoting healthy aging, seniors' wellness, and the full participation of seniors in society.

5. Profiling the Secretariat as Nova Scotia's coordination centre for seniors' affairs and the knowledge centre for information about aging and the programs and services available to seniors.

G. CORE BUSINESS

#1. Intra/Intergovernmental Relations - Advising Secretariat Ministers of the concerns and priorities of seniors and formulating strategies to address the challenges and opportunities presented.

Major programs and activities include:

- Supporting the work of the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministers Responsible for Seniors and Committee of Officials.

- Convening meetings of the Ministers of the Secretariat and preparing support materials.
- Maintaining the Seniors Programs and Services Database (SPPD), in support of the F/P/T Ministers Responsible for Seniors.
- Organizing meetings between ministers, government officials, and seniors.
- Supporting efforts to document the history of the seniors' movement in Nova Scotia.

2. **Research, Fact Finding, Analysis, and Policy Development** - Participating in research with government departments, academics, and community groups to ensure policy formulation and advice is evidence-based.

- Maintaining a current and relevant *Statistical Profile of Older Nova Scotians* to inform public and policy audiences about the seniors population.
- Partnering with academia, community-based organizations, and other departments and levels of government on aging-related research.
- Facilitating partnerships with seniors and seniors' organizations through participation on various standing committees including the Medication Awareness Committee, Seniors' Safe Driving Committee, and Elder Abuse Awareness and Prevention Strategy Committee.
- Engaging in regular public policy consultations and information sharing sesssions with seniors and seniors' organizations through such fora as regular meetings with the Group of IX Seniors' Organizations, the Secretariat's Spring and Fall consultations with seniors' organizations, and other special task forces.
- Representing the interests of seniors on standing committees convened by other government departments, academia, and community-based organizations.
- Leading Nova Scotia's Task Force on Aging.

3. **Planning and Coordinating Programs and Services for Seniors** - Promoting the active involvement of seniors in society. Major programs and activities include:

- Supporting community-based seniors' organizations and enabling them to remain engaged in the community.
- Recognizing and supporting seniors' healthy aging by including seniors on standing committees and involving them in organizing and participating in activities and events such as the 50+ Expo, Seniors Art and Photo Galleries, and 50+ Seniors' Games.
- Partnering with the Office of Health Promotion to promote healthy living among older Nova Scotians and to develop community-based, peer-support, and volunteer seniors' networks.
- Overseeing the implementation of the Elder Abuse Awareness and Prevention Strategy.
- Administering the Seniors' Literacy Project and facilitating the development of life-long learning programs for seniors.
- Partnering with the Office of Health Promotion to implement the Injury Prevention Strategy among seniors, particularly as it relates to preventing falls.

#4. **Information and Education** - Serving as an information and resource centre on all matters relating to aging and seniors. Providing information to seniors is a critical core activity of the Secretariat that requires consistent resourcing. Major programs and activities include:

- Providing telephone-based information and referral to seniors and their families via the Seniors' Information Line.
- Preparing and distributing publications including the *Programs for Seniors* directory, *Senior Citizens' Secretariat Newsletter*, *Directory of Seniors' Councils, Clubs, Centres, and Organizations*, *Statistical Profile of Nova Scotia Seniors*, *and Seniors' Housing Directory*.
- Developing issue-based information packages.
- Obtaining and distributing information and resource materials through various venues.
- Developing and maintaining the Secretariat's website.
- Operating the Secretariat's Information Resource Centre and lending and distributing resource materials.
- Overseeing educational campaigns including the *Knowledge is the Best Medicine* campaign.
- Overseeing media relations.

H. PRIORITIES

Core Business Area # 1 - Intra/Intergovernmental Relations

Priority 1.1 - Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministers Responsible for Seniors: For the purpose of advising Secretariat Ministers of the concerns and priorities of seniors and formulating strategies to address the challenges and opportunities of an aging society, the Secretariat will:

- Prepare Nova Scotia's Minister Responsible for Seniors to participate in discussions on planning for Canada's older population at the Eighth Meeting of F/P/T Ministers Responsible for Seniors, planned for Quebec in spring 2005.
- Prepare a briefing book for Nova Scotia's Minister Responsible for Seniors in advance of the meeting in Quebec.
- Participate on the F/P/T Committee of Officials and in the preparatory work for the meeting of Ministers.

Core Business Area # 2 - Research, Fact Finding, Analysis, and Policy Development

Priority 2.1 - Update the *Statistical Profile of Nova Scotia Seniors*: For the purpose of informing public and policy audiences about the Nova Scotia population, the *Statistical Profile of Nova Scotia Seniors* will be updated using the latest sources. The update will be completed by March 31st, 2005.

Priority 2.2 - Form a Task Force on Aging: To formulate recommendations on future health and social programming needs of seniors, a task force on aging will be formed to facilitate partnerships with departments and various levels of government. This is a multi-year initiative. The following milestones will be achieved by March 31st, 2005:

- Establish a task force steering committee.
- Review and analyze publications/approaches in other jurisdictions.
- Undertake public consultations.
- Analyze feedback from the consultation and prepare a summary report.
- Complete a strategy for positive aging.

Priority 2.3 - Facilitate Partnerships with Seniors and Seniors' Organizations: To provide seniors and seniors organizations with opportunities to help identify solutions to specific issues, seniors will be encouraged to serve on various standing and project steering committees of the Secretariat, including the Medication Awareness Committee, Seniors' Safe Driving Committee, and Elder Abuse Awareness and Prevention Strategy Committee. These are on-going initiatives.

Priority 2.4 - Engage in Regular Consultations with Seniors and Seniors' Organizations: To facilitate the involvement of seniors in public policy consultation and information sharing, regular forums will be held such as meetings with the Group of IX Seniors Organizations, the Secretariat's Spring and Fall consultations with seniors' organizations, and other special task forces. These are on-going initiatives.

Core Business Area #3 - Planning and Coordinating Programs and Services for Seniors

Priority 3.1 - Strengthen Community-based Peer Support and Volunteer Networks for Seniors: To facilitate the active involvement of seniors in society and enable seniors to continue using the skills and abilities they have developed over the years, community-based peer support and volunteer networks for seniors will be strengthened. This is a multi-year initiative. The following milestones will be achieved by March 31st, 2005:

- Review volunteerism trends.
- Review volunteerism and seniors' skills bank models in other jurisdictions.
- Establish partnerships with other organizations with similar priorities.
- Develop a model to facilitate community-based peer support and volunteer networks for seniors.

Priority 3.2 - Encourage Healthy Living: New community-based approaches to encourage healthy living among older Nova Scotians will be identified and implemented in partnership with the Office of Health Promotion. This is a multi-year initiative. The following milestones will be achieved by March 31st, 2005:

- Review recommendations from the 2001 stakeholder's forum.

- Complete an environmental scan to identify successful approaches used in other jurisdictions and recommended by appropriate national organizations.
- Examine the roles and responsibilities of government and individuals for health, as it relates to ones' personal responsibility for adopting a healthy lifestyle.
- Raise awareness among seniors about the importance of healthy lifestyles.
- Propose specific initiatives to encourage healthy living among seniors.

Priority 3.3 - Implement the Elder Abuse Awareness and Prevention Strategy: The prevention of elder abuse and the development of programs and services to assist abuse victims will be encouraged. The implementation of the Elder Abuse Awareness and Prevention Strategy will continue to be implemented and a project implementation/communication plan will be developed to support it. This is a five-year strategy. The following milestones will be achieved by March 31st, 2005:

- Develop an implementation/communication plan.
- Take action on recommendations aimed at preventing the financial abuse of seniors.
- Seek funding partners to undertake specific initiatives.
- Participate in consultations pertaining to anticipated changes in the Adult Protection Act.

Priority 3.4 - Oversee Phase 3 of the Nova Scotia Seniors Literacy Project: To enhance the basic learning skills of seniors, the Secretariat, in partnership with the Nova Scotia Department of Education, will sponsor the project, "Enhancing the Literacy Skills of Nova Scotia Seniors using the Seniors' Literacy Resource Kit". The project is funded by the National Literacy Secretariat, Human Resources Development Canada. The following milestones will be achieved by the project's completion date of December 31, 2004:

- Offer a series of literacy workshops for seniors in five Nova Scotia communities.
- Evaluate the usefulness of the *Enhancing the Basic Learning Skills of Older Nova Scotians Resource Kit*.
- Seek funding partners to address seniors' health literacy.

Core Business Area #4 - Information and Education

Priority 4.1 - Operate the Seniors' Information Line: To ensure questions and concerns from seniors and their caregivers are addressed, the Seniors Information Line is accessible free of charge, from anywhere in the province, during regular working hours. After-hours calls will be returned the next business day. This is an on-going initiative.

Priority 4.2 - Provide Information and Educational Resource Materials to Seniors: To contribute to the knowledge and understanding that seniors and seniors' organizations have of the government and community-based programs and services available to seniors, the Secretariat's directories and website will be updated regularly and distributed to seniors using a variety of means. This is an ongoing initiative. The following milestones will be achieved by March 31st, 2005:

- Update and distribute *Programs for Seniors* directory and *Directory of Senior Citizens' Councils, Clubs, Centres and Organizations.*
- Redesign and update the Secretariat's website.
- Develop and publish a *Seniors' Housing Directory.*

Priority 4.3 - Operate the Information Resource Centre: To support evidence-based decision making and ensure Secretariat staff, committee members, seniors, government departments and others with an interest in aging have access to the latest books, reports, magazines, videos, pamphlets, newsletters, and websites on aging, the Information Resource Centre will be maintained. The Information Resource Centre helps the Secretariat to fulfill its role as an information and resource centre on all matters relating to aging and seniors in Nova Scotia. This is an ongoing initiative. The following milestones will be achieved by March 31st, 2005:

- Develop and initiate a communication plan to promote the Information Resource Centre.

Priority 4.4 - Strengthen Communications: To ensure consistent messaging and information sharing to seniors and Nova Scotians at large, the Secretariat will have access to a communications specialist, in partnership with Communications Nova Scotia and the Department of Health. This is an ongoing initiative. The following milestones will be achieved by March 31st, 2005:

- Assign a communications specialist to provide communications support to the Secretariat.

I. BUDGET CONTEXT

The Department of Health carries out finance, human resources, and information technology functions on behalf of the Secretariat. This enables the Secretariat to function with minimal expenditure for administrative overhead.

Several of the government's commitments require the Secretariat to serve in the capacity of lead agency or partner. To enable the Secretariat to carry out these initiatives in 2004-2005, including the Task Force on Aging, an additional budget allocation was provided.

The Secretariat has been successful in realizing resources from its project partners, such as the receipt of $56,000 from the National Literacy Secretariat of HRDC to continue its Seniors' Literacy Project, which focuses on improving the reading, writing, and math skills of older adults.

Another example of a significant and effective partnership at work for the seniors of Nova Scotia is the in-kind contribution negotiated between the Executive Director of the Secretariat with the Regional Director General of Social Development Canada (formerly HRDC) to assign a staff member to assist on issues affecting Nova Scotia seniors.

Nova Scotia Senior Citizens' Secretariat Estimated Budget Expenditures by Core Business			
Core Business Area		***2003-2004***	***2004-2005***
		$000's	***$000's***
Core Business #1.	**Intra/Intergovernmental Relations**		**27,700**
Core Business # 2.	**Research, Fact Finding, Analysis, and Policy Development**		**152,400**
Core Business # 3.	**Planning and Coordinating Programs and Services for Seniors**		**107,000**
Core Business #4.	**Information and Education**		**58,000**
Administration and Support			**48,000**
Total - Gross Current		**242,900**	**393,100**
Total - Program Expenses net of Recoveries			**393,100**
Salaries and Benefits		**378,900**	**378,900**
Total Budget			***772,000***
Funded Staff (FTEs)		**6**	**6**

J. PERFORMANCE MEASURES

In 2004-05, the Seniors' Citizens' Secretariat will establish a formal performance measurement system. Three performance measures were identified for 2004-05 to provide information about some of the Secretariat's key initiatives. Over time, new measures will be developed and current ones improved, as the Secretariat strives to continuously improve its performance.

In 2004-05, important baseline information will be established for each of the performance measures identified. This information will help the Secretariat set future performance targets.

Core Business Area 1: Intra/Intergovernmental Relations				
Outcome (immediate or intermediate)	**MEASURE**	**DATA**	**TARGET**	**Strategic Actions to Achieve Target**
Increased knowledge and understanding of seniors' issues under the purview of the F/P/T Ministers Responsible for Seniors and the policies, practices, and positions of the Nova Scotia government on these issues.	Satisfaction level of Nova Scotia's Minister Responsible for Seniors with the preparatory materials and advice received prior to and during the meeting of F/P/T Ministers Responsible for Seniors. A five-point rating scale will be used.	Baseline will be established in 2004-05	High level of overall satisfaction	Prepare briefing book and briefing notes. Partner with other departments/agencies to improve the quality of briefing notes. Hold a pre-meeting briefing, ad-hoc on-site briefings, and a de-briefing.

Core Business Area 2: Research, Fact Finding, Analysis, and Policy Development				
Outcome (immediate or intermediate)	**MEASURE**	**DATA**	**TARGET**	**Strategic Actions to Achieve Target**
Seniors have opportunities to provide advice on public policy issues.	Satisfaction level of Nova Scotia's seniors' organizations with the information provided by the Senior Citizens' Secretariat about the policies, programs, and services available to seniors in Nova Scotia and with the mechanisms in place for bringing issues of concern to the attention of the Nova Scotia government.	Baseline will be established in 2004-05	High level of overall satisfaction	Hold regular meetings with the Group of IX Nova Scotia Seniors' Organizations. Organize regular consultations with seniors organizations. Monitor the Secretariat's Seniors' Information Line and tracking the issues of concern raised by callers. Update the Ministers of the Secretariat on emerging issues identified by seniors. Forward recommendations and advice received from seniors on the policies, programs, and services available to seniors in Nova Scotia to the appropriate government department.

Core Business Area 4: Information and Education				
Outcome (immediate or intermediate)	**MEASURE**	**DATA**	**TARGET**	**Strategic Actions to Achieve Target**
Information on programs and services for seniors is presented in a senior-friendly format.	Survey questions will be used to ask a sample of seniors and individuals who work with seniors to apply a five-point rating scale to assess the *Programs for Seniors* directory on characteristics such as: suitability of contents, comprehensiveness, readability, layout, and design. Additionally, survey participants will be given a set period of time to locate specific information in the directory. Their success rate for this task will be documented.	Baseline will be established in 2004-05	High level of overall satisfaction Target for finding information will be established once the baseline is set	Maintain contact with seniors' networks in Nova Scotia to ensure the directory is inclusive and comprehensive. Determine content and format of directory. Set up a relevant editorial board to assist in planning and organization of the publication. Update information annually and add information on new programs and services. Apply best practices for readability.